

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 03171 150753Z
ACTION EUR-12

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LIMITED OFFICIAL SE ATHENS 3171

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, GR
SUBJECT: AVEROFF ATTACKS PAPANDREOU

1. DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF PUBLICLY ATTACKED ANDREAS PAPANDREOU ON APRIL 13 FOR THE PASOK LEADER'S REMARKS TO THE NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT HERE APRIL 11. AVEROFF, WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST OUTSPOKEN, CONSISTENT AND AGGRESSIVE CRITIC OF PAPANDREOU IN THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT, CALLED INTO QUESTION PAPANDREOU'S JUDGMENT (E.G. HIS ASSERTION THAT GREECE COULD OBTAIN ATOMIC WEAPONS), POINTED OUT HIS INCONSISTENCIES, BELITTLED HIS RECOMMENDATIONS, AND JOKED ABOUT PAPANDREOU'S CLAIM THAT HE PRESENTLY HAS 35 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE.

2. PAPANDREOU THEN REPLIED BY SUGGESTING THAT AVEROFF WAS ANGERED BECAUSE HE, PAPANDREOU, HAD SUGGESTED IN HIS INTERVIEW THAT THERE WERE OTHER ALTERNATIVES TO GREECE'S "SUBMISSION TO THE ORDERS OF THE PENTAGON AND NATO".

3. COMMENT: THIS LITTLE TEMPEST HAS BEEN GIVEN
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 03171 150753Z

WIDESPREAD PRESS ATTENTION, AND THE ORIGINAL NEW YORK TIMES INTERVIEW HAS BEEN REPRINTED IN FULL IN ELEFTHERTYPIA (WITH SOME MISTRANSLATIONS THAT ARE FAVORABLE TO PAPANDREOU -- E.G., THE ENGLISH "DEMAGOGUE" IS TRANSLATED AS "DEMOCRAT").

4. PAPANDREOU'S CLAIM THAT HE PRESENTLY HOLDS

35 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IS A CONTROVERSIAL ONE AMONG
GREEK POLITICIANS. HOWEVER, NOBODY DISPUTES THAT
HE HAS RISEN FROM THE 25 PERCENT HE RECEIVED IN THE
NOVEMBER 1977 ELECTION. WE WOULD NOT, HOWEVER,
THAT EVEN 35 PERCENT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH TO GIVE
HIM A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT IF HIS OPPONENTS WERE
RELATIVELY UNITED.

MCCLOSKEY

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